

IN THE CLAIMS

Amend claims 1-3, 6, 16-18 and 20-27 to read:

1. An isolated nucleic acid sequence encoding a polypeptide having starch branching enzyme Class A (SBE II) activity in cassava, the encoded polypeptide comprising at least an effective portion of the amino acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 29 or SEQ. ID. NO. 31.

2. (amended once) A nucleic acid sequence according to claim 1, comprising nucleotides 21-2531 of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 29, or a functionally equivalent nucleotide sequence which hybridises under stringent hybridisation conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 29.

3. (amended once) A nucleic acid sequence according to claim 1, comprising nucleotides 131-2677 of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 31, or a functionally equivalent sequence which hybridises under stringent hybridisation conditions with the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 31.

6. (amended once) An isolated nucleic acid sequence comprising at least 200bp and exhibiting at least 88% sequence identity with the DNA sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 29 or SEQ. ID. NO. 31, operably linked in the sense or anti-sense orientation to a promoter operable in plants, said sequence encoding a polypeptide having starch branching enzyme Class A (SBE II) activity in cassava.

16. (amended once) A method of altering the expression of a gene naturally present in a plant host cell, said gene encoding a polypeptide having SBE II activity in cassava, the method comprising introducing into the cell a nucleic acid sequence comprising at least 200bp and exhibiting at least 88% sequence identity with the DNA sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 29 or SEQ. ID. NO. 31, operably linked in the sense or anti-sense orientation to a suitable promoter active in the host cell, and causing transcription of the introduced nucleotide sequence to produce a transcript, said transcript and/or a translation product thereof being sufficient to interfere with the expression of the gene naturally present in the host cell, thereby altering the expression of the gene.

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17. (amended once) A method according to claim 16, wherein the host cell is selected from the group consisting of a cassava cell, banana cell, potato cell, pea cell, tomato cell, maize cell, wheat cell, barley cell, oat cell, sweet potato cell and rice plant cell.

18. (amended twice) A method according to claim 16, comprising the introduction of one or more further nucleic acid sequences, operably linked in the sense or anti-sense orientation to a suitable promoter active in the host cell, and causing transcription of the one or more further nucleic acid sequences to produce a transcript, said transcript and/or a translation product thereof being sufficient to interfere with the expression of a gene(s) naturally present in the host cell.

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20. (amended twice) A method according to claim 18, wherein the further nucleic acid sequence comprises a portion of an SBE I gene effective to interfere with the expression of an SBE I gene naturally present in the host cell.

21. (amended once) A method according to claim 20, wherein the further nucleic acid sequence comprises a portion of a cassava SBE I gene effective to interfere with the expression of an SBE I gene naturally present in the host cell.

22. (amended twice) A method according to claim 16, wherein the host cell is selected from the group consisting of cassava cell, banana cell, potato cell, pea cell, tomato cell, maize cell, wheat cell, barley cell, oat cell, sweet potato cell and rice cell.

23. (amended once) A method according to claim 16, wherein the introduced sequence inhibits expression of the gene naturally present in the host cell and wherein the altered host cell gives rise to starch which contains less branching compared to starch from an unaltered cell.

24. (amended twice) A method according to any one of claims 16-22, further comprising the step of regenerating the altered host cell into a plant or plantlet.

25. A method of obtaining starch having altered properties, comprising regenerating a plant from an altered host cell according to the method of claim 24, and extracting the starch therefrom.

~~26. A plant or plant cell into which has been artificially introduced a nucleic acid sequence comprising at least 200bp and exhibiting at least 88% sequence identity with the corresponding region of the DNA sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 29 or SEQ. ID. NO. 31, operably linked in the sense or anti-sense orientation to a promoter operable in plants, or the progeny thereof, wherein said sequence encodes a polypeptide having starch branching enzyme Class A (SBE II) activity in cassava.~~

27. (amended once) A plant obtainable by the method of claim 24.